

Pam
India

An essay, to show that no
intention has existed, or does not
exist, of doing violence to the
religious prejudices of India



Pam. Indira



AN ESSAY, &c.



1898, 1899, 1900

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1910, 1911, 1912

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD,
BOOKSELLER TO HER MAJESTY, OPPOSITE ALBANY,
PICCADILLY.

1808.

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PREFACE.

A most dangerous alarm has been excited of an intention, on the part of respectable public authorities, of introducing the Christian Religion in India, and of subverting, if not by violence, at least by the influence of authority, the Religion of the natives. We were led to examine the circumstances and facts, that led to this opinion ; and after a careful investigation, we found that there was no ground whatever for alarm. As this circumstance does not appear sufficiently known, we have been induced to lay our observations before the Public ; in hopes that they may tend to quiet any further apprehensions on that head, both in this Country, and in India.

AN ESSAY, &c.

THE facility with which strong impressions may be communicated to the mind of the English public, upon a subject new to their feelings and habits of thinking, has been often remarked. There is a love of justice in the national character, which renders their feelings alive, not only to any invasion of their own rights, but also to any supposed attempt upon the liberties of others, however removed from them by distance of place or circumstances. The sentiment does honour to those who partake in it; and could only be produced by the blessings of our constitution of government, which raises the human character in all its energies, and expands the mind to the widest range of observation and reflection.

These remarks have been seldom more strongly justified than by some late discussions in the

public prints on the subject of Christianity, as connected with the project of introducing that religion more generally throughout India. Few other subjects, certainly, could furnish so many motives for general interest. A plan was represented as in agitation, to overthrow the pagan worship in India, and to establish the Christian religion in its stead. Sentiments of the most opposite kind were, naturally, excited. In this, as in most other instances, every one was too ready to bring home the case to the habits of his own prejudices and feelings. The true Christian joyed in the prospects of extending the blessings of his faith to other nations; to the Jew, as well as to the Gentile. The man accustomed to take his impressions from circumstances of local residence in India, viewed with awe the subversion of an establishment which had subsisted from the most remote antiquity, and was sanctioned by the habits and prejudices of numerous nations. The man of general politics saw, or thought he saw, in this change, the seeds of a great revolution, extending to the civil as well as the religious institutions of India, and shaking the foundations of our European establishments to their very centre. Whilst these were the feelings of men acting on general and liberal, though opposite sentiments of propriety, there were not wanting others who found,

in this new scheme, matter for the gratification of less dignified feelings. Personal prejudice aimed its shaft at individual character, and sought for the gratification of private resentment in the discussion of the general plan.

The subject is introduced to the notice of the public by "*A Letter to the Chairman of the East-India Company, on the danger of interfering in the religious opinions of the natives of India; and on the views of the British and Foreign Bible-Society, as directed to India. By Thomas Twining, Esq. late Senior Merchant on the Company's Bengal Establishment.*"

Mr. Twining commences his address by remarking, that it is with infinite concern and alarm, he had lately heard of proceedings, which convey to his apprehension, evidence of a strong disposition, in a quarter where, above all others, its existence is most to be dreaded, to interfere in the religious opinions of the native inhabitants of India. He must observe, he continues, that his fears of attempts to disturb the religious systems of India, have been especially excited, by his hearing that a Society exists in this country, the "chief object of which is the
 " 'universal' dissemination of the Christian
 " faith; particularly amongst those nations of
 " the East; to whom we possess a safe facility
 " of access, and whose minds and doctrines are

“ known to be most obscured by the darkness
 “ of infidelity.”

We shall shew that Mr. Twining's apprehensions are entirely groundless, and that no idea has ever been entertained by the Society alluded to, nor by the Indian Directors at home; or their governments abroad, of doing violence to the religious prejudices of our subjects in Asia.

Mr. Twining informs us, that Lord Teignmouth, late Governor-General of India, and now a member of the Board of Controul, is president of a religious association called the British and Foreign Bible-Society; and that two of the directors of the India Company are members.

This society which has subsisted, we believe, for some years,* has for its sole object the dispersion of the Holy Scriptures into different quarters of the globe, for the purpose of extending more generally, the knowledge of our religion. India does not appear to be a more immediate object of the Society's attention than some other countries, equally obscured in error and paganism. And different notices, accordingly, appear in the extract given from the pro-

* This Society is to be distinguished from another, nearly allied to it, in their common object, *The Society for promoting Christian knowledge.*

ceedings of their extending their views to Turkey, the Islands of the South Sea, and even to China. The circumstance, which particularly attracts Mr. Twining's observation, is, that a correspondence had been opened with some gentlemen at Fort William in Bengal, and that they had held forth encouragement for the translation of the Scriptures into the different Eastern languages. No other circumstance, whatever, is imputed to the Society.

It is material, in considering this subject, not to confound two things in their nature essentially distinct; the acts of the Society at home; and the acts of its delegates abroad. The Society itself, may be every way rational and commendable, yet may, like other public bodies, be sometimes, indiscreetly, served. The master is only answerable for the acts of a servant, in so far, as they naturally flow from his instructions. That a Society should exist in Great Britain for the general propagation of the Christian religion is, certainly, no disparagement to the character of the nation; and it is as little so to the character of the Indian directory to find amongst its number some of their own members. Fortunate, indeed, had it been for India, and fortunate for this Country, had such a spirit, more generally, distinguished our countrymen abroad. Where such has been the case, their

labours, in their several walks of life, have been marked by charity, benevolence, and good will towards men. And we believe, that if there is any circumstance, which has, more particularly, excited the esteem and confidence of the Indian towards an European, it has been, finding him sincere and true in the attachments to his own faith. The enumeration of particular instances might look like individual compliment; but the fact is universally known to every person who has visited that country.

As the observations of Mr. Twining afford no more particular description of the above Society than what we have already given, we shall not think it necessary to dwell further on this head; but shall attend him in his observations on the conduct of the Missionaries in India. He brings forward to the notice of the public, Extract of a letter from the Rev. Mr. Carey, chief Minister of the Baptist Mission in the East Indies, communicated by the Secretary of that Mission. Dated Calcutta, Feb. 27, 1804.

As Mr. Carey is made to occupy a prominent figure in the piece, it might be satisfactory to know who he is, and under what circumstances he has proceeded to India. Mr. Twining does not however afford us this information, nor are we able to supply the defect. In this letter, however, nothing is found to call for Mr. Twining's par-

ticular remark, nor in another letter from the Rev. Mr. Brown, Provost of the College of Fort William, of the 13th Sept. 1806, forwarding specimens of the translations of the Gospel into the Eastern languages. The concluding sentence, in the following extract from one of the Society's reports, is printed by Mr. Twining in superb capitals, in order to attract, we suppose, more particularly the public attention :

“ Though most of these (Mahometan) priests
 “ understand a little Arabic, and make a shift
 “ to read the Koran in that language, yet few
 “ of them, except where the Arabic is spoken,
 “ understand it sufficiently to enable them to
 “ read any other book in that language.

“ On this account, a translation of the Scrip-
 “ tures into Turkish is most desirable, and more
 “ calculated perhaps than any other measure to
 “ *hasten the downfall of that degrading and*
 “ *bloody superstition, which now for a long se-*
 “ *ries of ages has overspread so large and popu-*
 “ *lous a portion of the globe.*”

But notwithstanding the manner in which Mr. Twining has branded this passage, we can discover nothing in it so exceptionable. The same sentiment has been expressed by every writer, in every country, who has ever had occasion to mention that religion.

The next, and indeed the most important part

of Mr. Twining's pamphlet, consists of extracts from Mr. Buchanan's memoir on the subject of introducing the Christian religion.

The author of this memoir, the Rev. Dr. Claudius Buchanan, a regular clergyman of the Church of England, and late Vice-President of the College of Calcutta, is a person of the most excellent character, and of the most fervid piety. His long residence in India had afforded him the best opportunities of observing the gross idolatry and blind superstition of the natives. Under these impressions, he formed the idea of making some attempt to introduce to their knowledge the truths of our faith. And with this view, he has published a memoir on the subject, with proposals for translating the Scriptures into the Oriental languages. Mr. Buchanan has also proposed academical premiums for the best discourse on the subject of promoting the Christian religion in India. We regret that his ardour in these pursuits should, sometimes, have laid his writings open to the objections of severe criticism. Where there is much zeal, there will be indiscretion; and it seems inseparable from the agitation of a new plan, that its first mover should not have been influenced by a spirit of enthusiasm, rather than the dictates of common prudence. Men of genius are apt to overlook the means, whilst they are intent upon

the object of their pursuit. Under these impressions, we incline to believe that Mr. Buchanan has been too sanguine in his expectations of the facility with which the Hindoos might be led to renounce their ancient prejudices.

Mr. Buchanan, in his memoir, has taken a general view of the present state of religion amongst our Indian subjects. In doing this, he was led to notice the political bigotry and intemperate zeal of the Mahometans. He concludes his remarks on that subject in the following words:—

“ Is it then good policy to cherish a vindictive religion in the bosom of the empire for ever? Would it not accord with the dictates of the soundest wisdom to allow Christian schools to be established, where the children of poor Mahometans might learn another temper; the good effects of which would be felt, before one generation pass away? The adult Hindoo will hardly depart from his idol, or the Mahometan from his prophet, in his old age; but their children, when left destitute, may be brought up Christians, if the British Parliament please. But as matters now stand, the follower of Mahomet imagines that we consider it a point of honour to reverence his faith, and to despise our own. For he, every day, meets with Europeans, who

would more readily speak with disrespect of their own religion, than of his. No where is the bigotry of this intolerant faith nursed with more tenderness than in British India. While it is suffering concussion in every other part of the world, even to Mecca, its centre, (as by a concurring providence, toward its final abolition,) here it is fostered in the peaceful lap of Christian liberality."

"A wise policy seems to demand that we should use every means of coercing this contemptuous spirit of our native subjects."

However unexceptionable this passage may appear to the general reader, there have not been wanting some who have endeavoured to wrest its meaning to the worst purposes. The term *coercion* has been caught at, as if actual violence had been intended against the Mahometan faith.

A greater abuse of criticism has seldom appeared. When Mr. Buchanan proposes that we should use every means, he can only intend every legal means. This is the obvious import of his words.—In every discussion as to the power, or right to do any act, we always imply such powers or rights as are warranted by law, or arise from the usual circumstance of things. And as to repressing the contemptuous spirit of the Mahometan religion, it is, certainly, an ob-

vious duty to do so, whenever that spirit affects (as it always must when allowed its full operation) our political establishments in India. The *Koran*, the great and only rule of their faith, enjoins perpetual war against Christians.—“*O true Believers, take not the Jews or Christians for your friends.*” (*Koran*, ch. 5. p. 141: Sale’s translation.) “*They are infidels who say, Verily God is Christ the son of Mary.*” (Ch. 5. p. 133.) “*O true Believers, wage war against such of the Infidels as are near you, and let them find severity in you, and know that God is with those who fear him.*” (Ch. 9. p. 265.)

These passages, to which many others might be added, sufficiently shew the hostile spirit of their religion. And shall any one, after this, venture to defend such a religion? As a Christian, will he not condemn it? As a member of society, will he not say, that a wise policy seems to dictate that we should use every means of coercing it?

But these precepts of the Mahometan religion are not the blind effusions of a speculative zeal. They have practical effects; they pass into real life, and influence the civil conduct in its most common duties. For it must always be remembered, that their religious, is also their civil code of laws. We copy the following passage from a

work upon the Mahometan law, as translated by Mr. Gladwin:—*Article “Testimony. It is “ a religious duty to give a true testimony. The “ testimony of a Zemmi (a Christian or Jew) “ against a Moslem, is not to be admitted. And “ the testimony of a Moslem against a Zemmi “ is good.”*

It were needless to remark on these passages; as it must be obvious, that the Mahometan religion is subversive of all civil intercourse; and that nothing but a judicious coercion of its spirit, could maintain our empire in India for a day.

If nothing else is objected to, or capable of objection, in Mr. Buchanan’s memoir, he must certainly be justified in his ideas as to the Mahometan faith.

We proposed to shew that no idea had ever been entertained by the Society to disturb the religious prejudices of the Indians.

In respect to the first point, it is only necessary to quote the first article of the Society’s constitution. “The designation of this Society “ shall be the British and Foreign Bible-Society, “ of which the sole object shall be to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures.” (*Art. 1. p. 25. Report 1.*)

It has not been shewn, that the object of this Society has been, hitherto, attended with any

bad consequences in a political point of view; there is, therefore, nothing that calls for justification on their part. But the late agitated state of the public mind in some parts of India, will certainly lead the Society to pause, before they proceed further, and await for a fitter season for their labours. "*There is a time for all things,*" is a scriptural truth.

In respect to the second head of our argument, that no idea had ever prevailed on the part of our governments abroad, of offering violence to the prejudices of the natives; this will be best illustrated by calling to recollection, a few acts of our Governors, too distinct and brilliant to be mistaken. The great Lord Clive countenanced the country forms of worship, to the utmost extent the natives could desire. Mr. Vansittart, Verelst, and Lord Pigot, were all, equally remarkable for the same disposition. It would be hard to say whether Mr. Hastings was more of a Mussulman or Hindoo, he was such a perfect master of the tenets, and so great a protector of both religions. Seminaries for advancing a knowledge of the Mahometan and Braminical faith amongst the natives were founded under his government, at the expence of the Company.

Lord Cornwallis was too great a lover of justice not to have held sacred from the arm of the civil power, the religious privileges of the

natives. Lord Teignmouth, however eminent for his attachment to the cause of the Christian religion, never allowed his feelings in that respect, to trespass on the civil duties of his high office, in the protection which was due to the less-informed Indian; whose errors he has, since his return to Europe, so laudably endeavoured to correct.

During the period of Marquis Wellesley's government, a circumstance occurred which peculiarly marks the spirit of his administration. An officer in command of the troops at some particular station (we believe Columba) on the Island of Ceylon, and who, having lately arrived from Europe, was not sufficiently aware of the prejudices of the natives, ordered a battalion of Bengal sepoys, who happened to be stationed at that place, to attend divine service at one of the Christian churches. Marquis Wellesley was no sooner informed of the circumstance, than he addressed a letter to the Officer on the subject, reprobating, in pointed terms, this singular outrage on the prejudices and feelings of the natives.* This circumstance, is the

* We are sorry that it is not in our power to lay this letter before the public, which was, at one time, in pretty general circulation in India, and was regarded as a master-piece of fine writing.

more deserving of notice, as the Island of Ceylon was not at that time within the immediate jurisdiction of his Lordship's government. Nor is this the only feature in his Lordship's administration, by which his respect for the religious prejudices of the natives was distinguished; many other instances of the like nature might be given. Nor did the noble Marquis shew himself indifferent to a discreet discharge of the functions of the Missionaries; so far as was consistent with the protection due to other religions; and he particularly patronized Mr. Carey.

The above statement of circumstances will sufficiently evince the toleration and indulgence of our governments in India to the religious prejudices of the natives.

The orders or instructions, as sent out in that respect by the Directors, being confined to their written correspondence, do not admit of equal notoriety. The acts of their Governors as above alluded to, sufficiently, testify however, the spirit of these orders. It is generally understood, that the Directors have approved of the assurances that were given by the Madras Government to the army, recently after the Vellore affair, that there was no intention whatever to disturb the religious prejudices of the natives; and further desired that publicity might be

given to their sentiments in that respect, if necessary.

It has been said by some, who have written on this subject, that the Missionaries should be recalled. But this is hardly necessary or expedient. Itineration has, we understand, been prohibited; as also the dispersion of religious tracts. The civil magistrates are armed with authority sufficient to maintain the peace of the country; and we are to presume, that on a proper occasion, they will do their duty. The actual recall of the Missionaries, might strengthen the idea of our having really intended to interfere in the religious prejudices of the country. Every concession, it has been said, is a weakness. Every needless one is certainly so. By yielding unnecessarily in one particular instance, we may encourage extravagant claims in some other. To what extent the Christian religion might be admitted in India; and under what circumstances it should be ushered in, are questions of great gravity and importance; which require the hands of a master, and a fit season to agitate.

At present, perhaps, the object should be, to improve the condition of our subjects of that persuasion, by raising them to circumstances of greater respectability in their own eyes, and in that of the other casts. In a country where the

temporal success is supposed to be influenced by the decrees of Providence, the degraded state of any particular sect, will naturally be ascribed to the circumstance of their religion not being approved of, in the eye of Heaven. *Omnia enim prospera eveniunt colentibus Deos, adversa spernentibus*, was not more peculiarly a maxim of antiquity, than it is of Indian wisdom. The Malabar Christians (as they are called on the coast of Coromandel), instead of enjoying any peculiar protection from the circumstances of their religion, seem rather proscribed. A Brahmin, or Gentoo writer, placed at the head of one of the departments under government, shall fill every station in that department with Brahmins or Gentoos; and for no other reason but because they are of the same cast with himself. Yet an European will refuse the slightest mark of favour or distinction to those of his own religion. What must the inference be, to an uninformed native, but that the circumstance of our religion carries nothing in it, to imply integrity or worth in its professors? Was there any political motive for this distinction, we might approve of it. Are the Brahmins so much respected? No; they are detested to a proverb. "*When the Brahmin rules, every thing goes wrong*," say the Indians. Have the Christians, when employed, ever shewn themselves

unworthy of confidence? Never. During the years 1790, and 1791, when the Tangore country was under the management of the Company, Christians were often employed in the revenue, and other concerns, and always to their own honour, and the satisfaction of their superiors in office. It is true they were then under the eye of that extraordinary man, Mr. Swarts, who exercised a vigilant and severe discipline over his flock. The school at Egmore, near Madras, has produced a number of young men who have been remarkable for the purity of their morals, and the advantages derived to the public from their attainments. They have been employed as land-surveyors with great success. And there are peculiar circumstances, in their uncommon knowledge of the English and country languages, from which Government might derive great benefit. But let us turn to the foreign settlements, and observe the influence of our religion under other circumstances. At Pondicherry, a very great proportion of the inhabitants are Christians, and the domestic servants and head-managers of the French families, almost exclusively so.

The fidelity and attachment which these people have shewn to their masters in their distress, is hardly to be described. The capture of Pondicherry by our arms in 1792, had, from un-

avoidable causes, reduced many opulent families to circumstances of great penury. Their Christian domestics have remained with their old masters, and have dedicated their labours and industry to their support. Many families have had no other means of existence, than what they have derived from their Christian servants; and others of that religion in the place. Whatever the prejudice against the order may be, and however justly incurred, or otherwise, it cannot be denied that the Jesuits were great masters in the art of instruction; and the advances which the Christians of Pondicherry have made in the language and principles of European knowledge, is an eminent proof of the ability of those Fathers, and of the improvement, which the natives of India are capable of receiving, under proper instructors. The natural militia of our large towns, is the Christian inhabitants, rather than a corps of Mussulmen or Hindoos, whose fidelity might be corrupted, and whose situation as a corps for the general duty of the town would favour an attempt to deliver it up to the enemy. The corps of *Topasses*, or native Christians, (during Lord Cornwallis's war with Tippoo,) defended the fort of *Combatoire*, under the gallant Chambers, with singular bravery.

We are told that there is a great prejudice

against Christian missionaries in India. But I desire to know then, why so many have been always tolerated? Were there not Roman missionaries in every district throughout India? At *Tritchinapoly*, *Perambachum*, *Vellore*, and at, I believe, every town on the sea coast there were missionaries to be found.

It has been said that the natives of India are more peculiarly attached to their religion than those of other countries. Then, I desire to know, why there are more various and opposite sects of Religion in India than in any other country of the world? The Mahometan, the Hindoo, the Parsee, the Chinese, the Christian, and the Jew, (with their infinite variety of sects,) are all to be found in the same town, in perfect harmony and good fellowship. Each worships his own gods in his own way, and no one thinks of blaming his neighbour's faith.

Far be it from us, to approve of this distraction of opinions as to an object, upon which all men ought to be agreed; we merely, state the fact, as a proof that a general toleration was a leading feature in the character of India, and that the circumstance of our endeavouring to propagate our religion, is not the true cause of the dissatisfactions that have lately prevailed in that country. Men naturally think that one aggression will lead to another. And where the

house has been destroyed, the household gods (which could not protect it) will also be taken away. When *Sicily* complained against *Verres*, they stated their religion as the last article they were deprived of;—*sese jam ne Deos quidem in suis urbibus, ad quos confugerent habere.* The feelings of human nature have been the same in all ages and countries. But these are delicate points; respecting which “a man’s own mind will tell him more, *than seven sages that sit on a high tower.*”

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE writing the above, we have had an opportunity of seeing a publication entitled *A Vindication of the Hindoos*. It consists almost entirely of extracts from the ancient mythology of that people, as translated by *Sir William Jones*, and other *Sanscrit* scholars.

The object of these extracts is, to shew that the religion of the Hindoos contained a pure system of morals. Perhaps so: but does not every religion inculcate an observance of integrity, fair dealing, and virtue in general, amongst the members of its faith? Without these, there could be no concord or unity amongst men, nor could any religion whatever be established. Neither the priest nor the altar could be sacred from the hand of violence, if the great duties of society were not inculcated as a part also of the Holy creed.—But where are those great lessons to be found exemplified?—

"*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" A religious code is only of importance (in a political point of view) by the effects which it produces on the morals and habits of the people. Good faith is the first law of society. But can the most solemn oath of the *Hindoo* be trusted? No. Every one, conversant with their manners, will assure us, that there is no case that may not be made out by evidence in a court of justice, where Hindoo testimony is called for.— This fact, which is undeniable, speaks more to the senses, than a thousand volumes of *Sanscrit*. Besides, who reads that language? A few priests. The great body of the people of India are as ignorant of the antient Sanscrit writings, as the present inhabitants of Greece are of those of Plato.

" Of good and evil much they argued then,

" Of happiness and final misery,

" 'Passion and apathy, glory and shame,

" Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy."

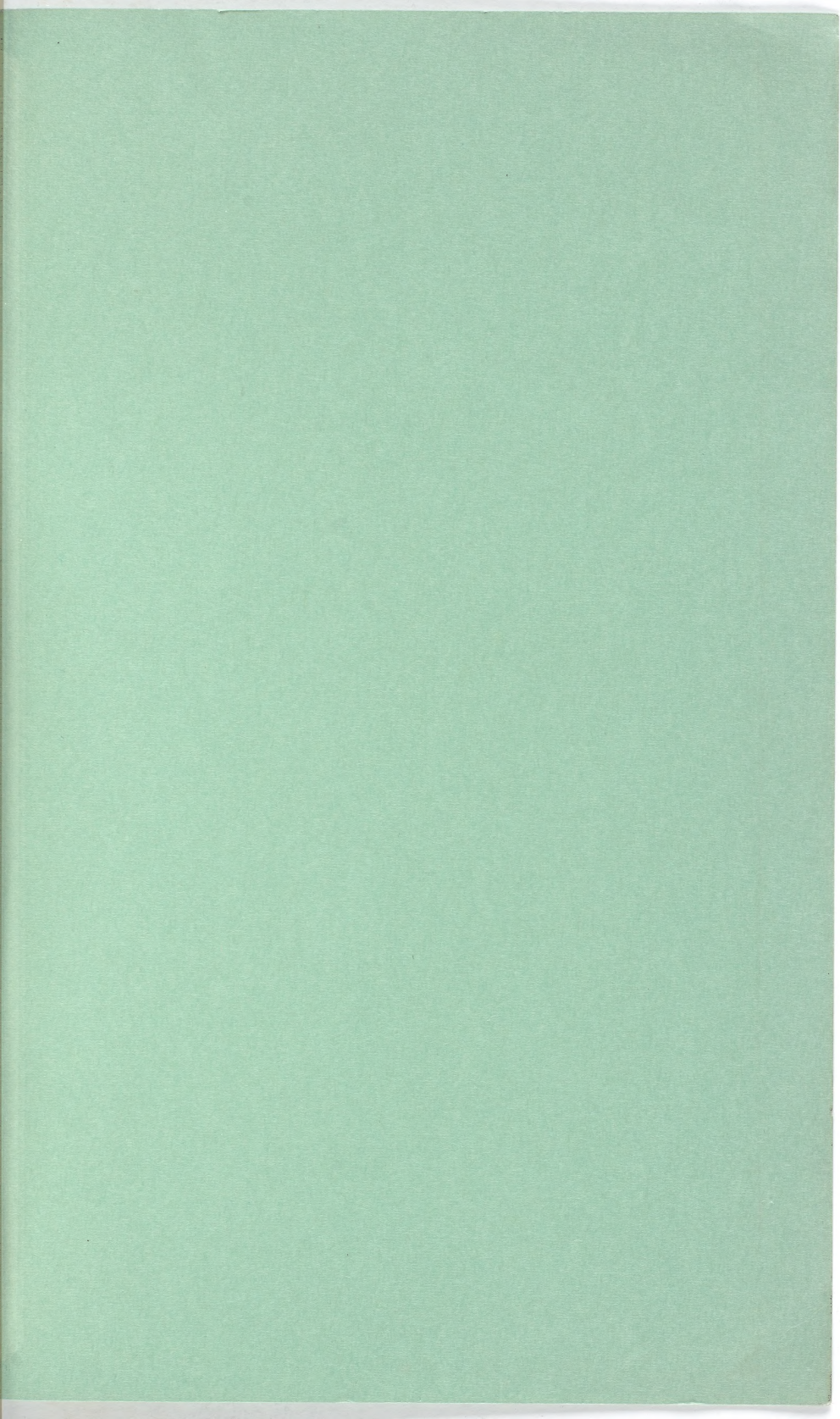
FINIS.

"The Hindu faith is a political
faith is the first law of society. But even the
most solemn oath of the Hindu is not
Not every one, however, with their man-
ner, will assure us that there is no case that
may not be made out by evidence in a court of
justice, where Hindu testimony is called for—
This fact, which is undeniable, speaks more to
the Hindu than a thousand volumes of Sanskrit.
For the Hindus themselves that language of A few hundred
The great body of the people of India are an
ignorant of the ancient Sanskrit writings and
present instruments of Government are of course of
plain

Of good and evil, and of right and wrong
Of duty and of sin, and of the law of God
Of the soul and of the body, and of the mind
Of the world and of the hereafter, and of the future

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FAITH

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